

REMARKS

Entry of this Amendment under 37 C.F.R. §1.116 is respectfully requested because it cancels claims, thereby placing the application into allowance or better form for appeal. No new matter is believed to be added to the application by this Amendment.

Status of the Claims

Upon entry of this Amendment claims 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 17, 41-46 and 52-57 are pending in the application. Claims 15, 19-32 and 37-40 are cancelled by this amendment. Claims 1 and 52 have been amended to incorporate the subject matter of cancelled allowable claim 15. Claim 17 has been amended so as not to depend upon a cancelled claim.

The Examiner asserts that claim 51 is pending at line 4 of the Office Action Summary. However, claim 51 was cancelled in the Response filed November 25, 2002.

Election/Restriction (Paragraph 2 of the Office Action)

The Examiner requires cancellation of withdrawn claims 19-32 and 37-40 prior to allowance of the application. The Examiner's comments have been considered. Claims 19-32 and 37-40 are cancelled by this Amendment.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) (Paragraphs 3-8 of the Office Action)

Claims 1, 3, 7, 9, 11, 41-46 and 55-57 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over Imoto (U.S. Patent No. 5,497,445), Furuya (U.S. Patent 4,464,762 and Shacklette (U.S. Patent 5,850,498). The Examiner adds the teachings of Tabuchi (U.S. Patent No. 6,112,002) to Imoto, Furuya and Shacklette to reject claims 52-54. The Examiner adds the teachings of Thomas (U.S. Patent No. 5,235,663) to Imoto, Furuya and Shacklette to reject claim 5. The Examiner adds the teachings of Maruo (U.S. Patent No. 5,572,619) to Imoto, Furuya and Shacklette to reject claim 13. Applicants traverse.

Independent claims 1 and 52 have been amended to incorporate the subject matter of allowed claim 15 (now cancelled). Claim 15 was free of the above-mentioned rejections. Claims dependent upon claims 1 and 52 are patentable for at least the above reasons.

This rejection is accordingly overcome and withdrawal thereof is respectfully requested.

Information Disclosure Statements

The Examiner is respectfully requested to consider the Information Disclosure Statement filed July 23, 2003, and to make the initialed PTO-1449 form of record in the application in the next official action.

Applicants thank the Examiner for considering the Information Disclosure Statement filed November 22, 1999, and for making the initialed PTO-1449 form of record in the application in the Office Action mailed November 30, 2001.

Prior Art Not Utilized By The Examiner

The prior art cited but not utilized by the Examiner indicates the status of the conventional art that the invention supercedes. No additional remarks are accordingly necessary.

The Drawings

The Examiner is respectfully requested to indicate whether the drawing figures are acceptable in the next official action.

Priority

The Examiner has acknowledged foreign priority, most recently in the Office Action mailed July 31, 2003.

Conclusion


Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Robert E. Goozner, Ph.D. (Reg. No. 42,593) at the telephone number of the undersigned


below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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